

**CITY OF NEWTON**  
**BOARD OF ALDERMEN**  
**TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT**

**Thursday, November 18, 2004**

Members Present: Candace Havens (Chair), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Rosalie Myers (Clerk), Sgt. Norcross (Police), Scott Lennon (Aldermanic Representative), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer)

Aldermen Present: Albright, Johnson, Linsky, Mansfield, Parker, Stewart

#390-03      JEFF GOLDMAN et al requesting speed/traffic control measures on HERRICK ROAD, Newton Centre (Ward 6). **HELD 2/19/04**

**ACTION:**      **NAN (5-0)**

**NOTE:**      Clint Schuckel noted that this item was previously held in order to answer some questions about the City's authority to enforce speed or traffic controls on a private way. He confirmed that the City's authority is very limited. He added that speed humps are allowed on private ways and are prohibited on public ways by City ordinance.

Petitioner, Jeff Goldman explained that since the previous review, speed bumps were installed on the private way to slow traffic and this has been helpful. He still feels that the volume of traffic is higher than desired and there is a problem with people speeding at Chase Street, which borders the private way.

Ald. Mansfield and Lennon indicated that related issues have been reviewed in the Special Permit process.

Candace Havens noted that a request for a stop sign at that intersection has been filed, but is not part of this request.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action at this time, noting that the circumstances will again be reviewed when the stop sign request comes before the Council.

#289-03      ADAM PELLER, 28 Daniel Street, requesting three-way stop sign at the intersection of JACKSON STREET and DANIEL STREET (Ward 6). **HELD 5/25/04**

**ACTION:**      **NAN (5-0); APPROVE AS AMENDED #289-04(2) (5-0)**

**NOTE:**      The Traffic Council previously held this item so City staff could explore the potential for street redesign. Clint Schuckel and David Koses indicated that

funding is currently available and the RFP process is underway to hire a consultant to do the design work.

Adam Peller asked whether stop signs could be installed in the interim. Candace Havens indicated this was considered at the previous review and the majority of the Council did not support stop signs there.

The Traffic Council supported the concept of redesign and acknowledged that review of street redesign is not within their purview or part of the original proposal. As such, the Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend intersection reconfiguration be studied and referred by the Board to the appropriate committee. #289-03(2)TRAFFIC COUNCIL requesting use of The Terraces traffic mitigation funds to hire a consultant to examine a redesign of the intersection of Jackson Street and Daniel Street. (Ward 6)

#41-04

ISAAC BERZIN, 206 Sumner Street, Apt. 6, requesting discussion of parking problems on Sumner Street (Ward 6).

**ACTION:**

**HELD (5-0)**

**NOTE:**

Isaac Berzin said he and his wife live in an apartment in Newton Centre that provides no on-site parking. There are 1-hour meters on most of the adjacent block. They pay to park their car at a metered space in front of their house in the afternoons. For religious reasons, they cannot pay the meters on Saturday and have received numerous tickets. Sometimes they have difficulty securing a parking space at all. They are seeking help from the City to address their problem.

Clint Schuckel described the various parking restrictions up and down Sumner Street, noting that parking is allowed on Sumner Street north of Willow on Saturdays, however it is not posted as such, though existing signs suggests that it is not allowed. Employees, customers, and valets heavily use the metered and unmetered curbside parking spaces throughout the area.

Isaac Berzin suggested a sticker program that allows residents to park in metered spaces or pay a regular fee for their use, given the circumstances. He noted there are 7 families in the building that are affected this way.

Alderman Parker supported the concept of a sticker program in the City in other circumstances and questioned its feasibility in this situation.

Candace Havens felt that it is appropriate for village centers to have higher density housing with less parking provided to encourage the reduction in use of cars where transportation lines and support businesses are readily available. She also favored changing 1-hour meters to 2-hour meters with 15-minute meters on

the corners to accommodate some quick turnover as well as longer, short-term parking. She noted it is not City policy to have meters in front of residences and it appears the meters are in this location because of its zoning, rather than its use, as most of the surrounding area is commercial. David Koses concurred.

Clint Schuckel recommended a two-hour restriction on a section of Sumner Street north of Willow, Monday to Friday from 9-5, with Saturdays unrestricted so residents would be able to park there from late afternoon and all day Saturday. Current City Ordinance reads “two parking” with no associated days or times. However, since the residents on that block were not notified of the meeting, he suggested the item be held to allow for proper notification. The Traffic Council concurred and voted (5-0) to hold the item.

#42-04

ADAM HETNARSKI, 235 Highland Street, requesting STOP SIGN at the intersection of Highland Street and Valentine Park (Ward 3).

**ACTION:**

**NAN (5-0)**

**NOTE:**

Adam Hetnarski said the street was recently repaved and widened and since then, speeding has been a problem; people can use Valentine as a cut-through to Chestnut, avoiding lights on Commonwealth Ave. He had concerns about the safe use of the crosswalks at the intersections of Highland/Valentine and Valentine Park/Valentine and added there are no crossing guards at either.

Clint Schuckel indicated that the warrants for stop signs on this street are not met, as traffic volumes are very low on the side streets. He would not recommend a stop sign at either intersection.

Ald. Lennon said that he would favor a stop sign, consistent with his position on other similar issues.

Candace Havens expressed concern about the sight lines and the speed at which cars appear to be traveling on Valentine. She felt a more visible crosswalk warning sign would help if placed south of the southerly crosswalk and that ultimately, traffic-calming measures were most appropriate.

Ald. Lennon pointed out that traffic-calming policies/designs are currently being considered and should not be ruled out for the future. The first motion to put a stop sign at Valentine and Valentine Park failed (1-4). Traffic Council moved to recommend no action on this item (5-0).

#78-04

HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting the installation of STOP SIGNS at the intersection of BEACON and WALNUT STREETS for right turn movements (Ward 6).

**ACTION:**

**NAN (5-0)**

**NOTE:**

Clint Schuckel said that a stop sign in a right-turn lane in a controlled intersection would not be as useful as the existing signs, which direct people to stop on red

lights before turning right at the intersection. He said that this portion of Walnut Street is currently under review for redesign and it is possible the intersection could be reconfigured at that time. In the meantime, he felt the existing signing was most appropriate, given the options.

Ald. Mansfield noted that one of the pedestrian-activated crossing buttons is not working properly and the Traffic Engineer noted this. He also said that he didn't support the addition of a stop sign here.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action on this item.

#80-04      ALD. JOHNSON & LINSKY requesting to prohibit parking all days on BLITHEDALE STREET starting at 7 a.m. rather than the existing start time of 8 a.m. (ends at 10 p.m.) (Ward 2).

**ACTION:**      **APPROVE AS AMENDED (3-2) (Schuckel, Norcross against)**  
**NOTE:**      Clint Schuckel indicated that there are currently two restrictions on the street. One restricts entry by residents only from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., school days. The other is a parking restriction from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m., school days.

Ald. Johnson and Linsky said that the neighborhood continues to be heavily traveled in the early morning hours and requests that no entering be allowed from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., instead of 8 a.m.; school starts at 7:50 a.m. and drop-offs begin before then. Parking on the street isn't as much of a problem as the traffic generated by parents dropping off kids and turning around in driveways in the morning and by kids drag racing after school on the street.

David Koses pointed out that there is a parking restriction on the street from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. and felt that having parking requirements that are different from entrance requirements would be confusing and suggested they be the same. Ald. Johnson agreed. Ald. Linsky felt the 10 p.m. parking limit was important because of the number of events held at the high school after school hours. Sgt. Norcross noted that enforcement of residents-only entrance and the a.m. restrictions are hard to enforce because of a shift change at 7:30 a.m.

Sgt. Norcross stated that the police have a difficult time enforcing the "entry by residents only" restriction because it would require questioning every driver. Clint Schuckel stated that he could not support restrictions that the police cannot enforce.

The Traffic Council voted (3-2) to prohibit parking as well as entry by non-residents of Blithedale from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. on school days. (Norcross and Schuckel voted against the motion.)

#81-04

LESLIE SKORNIK, 30 Grove Hill Avenue requesting parking restrictions on GROVE HILL AVENUE from Prospect Avenue to Lakeview Avenue, to discourage nonresident parking.

**ACTION:**

**APPROVE AS AMENDED (5-0)**

**NOTE:**

Leslie Skornik indicated that the neighborhood has become congested with students' cars from Prospect to Lakeview since restrictions on the upper portion of the street occurred a year ago. The street is narrow and neighbors have safety concerns.

Clint Schuckel confirmed the street is narrow and recommended two options to assure emergency access: limiting parking to one side or creating 2-hour parking on both sides during school hours. He said the street is about .4 miles from Newton North.

For the sake of consistency, neighbors supported extending the same restriction from the upper end of the block, which has a two-hour restriction from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. on school days.

While he sympathized with the neighborhood, David Koses favored the concept of “sharing the load” by not restricting parking beyond a certain distance from the school so that the excess demand for school parking is shared by many. He urged the Council to consider revisiting this issue on an area-wide basis when Newton North is redesigned.

Candace Havens wanted to encourage students to use alternative transportation to school and felt that one of the few tools available to the City is to make it less convenient by requiring students to walk farther to school once they park.

Ald. Johnson mentioned the availability of the Austin Street lot for student parking, which she believed was closer. She also favored the proposed restriction in hopes that consistent standards would make it easier to enforce. Ald. Linsky noted that the neighborhood had considered the options carefully and had reached consensus on what they felt would be livable for them.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend a 2-hour restriction from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. on school days.

#134-04

ALD. STEWART recommending a 15-minute parking limit in three spaces in front of the Lower Falls Post Office, 2344 Washington Street (Ward 4).

**ACTION:**

**NAN (4-0); APPROVE AS AMENDED #134-04(2) (4-0)**

**NOTE:**

Ald. Stewart noted this area was once a part of an urban renewal project in which the road was widened from Concord Street to the highway. Traffic has increased in this area over the years and many cars park along the south side of the street for varying amounts of time. It is no longer easy to stop briefly in front of the Post Office and the rear lot is tight and poorly configured. Parking on the south side of

the road has impacted the ability of cars to travel with ease from Wellesley towards Route 128 and two lanes become one lane at some times of the day. He suggested moving the centerline and restricting parking on the north side while accommodating short-term parking in front of the Post Office.

Clint Schuckel concurred with Ald. Stewart's observations. He said the street is 56 feet wide with four 14-foot lanes and could be reconfigured to allow four 12-foot lanes with parking on the side; demand for parking is greater on the south side and people don't park on the north side. He also noted a crosswalk that is relatively close to the stoplight and suggested the Council consider whether it should remain.

David Koses described another alternative in which one of the south side lanes would be eliminated alongside the parked cars. He also expressed concerns that short-term parking would result in higher turnover of spaces with more potential for conflicts.

The Council discussed metering the south side of the street and Ald. Stewart agreed it was appropriate here; there is metering on the Wellesley side of Washington Street and in most other village centers, including in front of local post offices.

The Traffic Council agreed to take no action on the proposed petition (4-0). The Traffic Council voted (4-0) to docket another item: (Havens was absent for vote)

#134-04(2) TRAFFIC COUNCIL requesting to allow public input regarding the following proposed changes to Washington Street between the Wellesley town line and Route 128: re-stripe Washington Street for four 12'-wide travel lanes and parking spaces on the south side between Concord Street and the ramps to/from Route 128; parking to be restricted as follows: designate "No Parking" on the northerly side; "No Parking" on the southerly side from the Wellesley town line to Concord Street; add two to four 15-minute metered parking spaces in front of the Lower Falls Post Office; add 2-hour meters for the remainder of the southerly side to a point near #2278 Washington Street. (Ward 4)

#370-04 DORIS WALSH, 113 West Street requesting handicapped parking space across the street from her residence (Ward 1).

**ACTION:** **APPROVED (4-0)**

**NOTE:** With the current handicap policies as a guide, the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities reviewed the request and recommended approval (6-0) of her request. The committee recognized that there is no parking allowed immediately in front of her home and, as such, recommended the space be located across the street from her home. She is aware that no parking would be allowed there from November to April and is willing to comply with that restriction. The Traffic Council voted (4-0) to approve the request. (Havens was absent for this vote).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair